BOY. As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three: but all they three[2], though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for, indeed, three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph,—he is white-livered, and red-faced; by the means whereof, 'a faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol,—he hath a killing tongue, and a quiet sword; by the means whereof 'a breaks words, and keeps whole weapons. For Nym,—he hath heard, that men of few words are the best men[3]; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers, lest 'a should be thought a coward: but his few bad words are match'd with as few good deeds; for 'a never broke any man's head but his own; and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal any thing, and call it,—purchase[4]. Bardolph stole a lute-case; bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence.
Nym, and Bardolph, are sworn brothers in filching: and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel: I knew, by that piece of service, the men would carry coals \

[1] — WINS bad humours.] In a former scene Nym says, [f6] the king hath *run* bad humours on the knight." We should therefore perhaps read *runs* here also. But there is little certainty in any conjecture concerning the dialect of Nym or Pistol.
MALONE

[2] — k.t .u THEY three.] We should read, I think, *all the* three." MALONE
" *They* three," is a vulgarism, to this day in constant use.
STEEVENS

3 — BEST men :] That is, *bravest*: so in the next lines, *good*

deeds ext *brave actions.* JOHNSON.

* They will steal any thing, and call it *purchase.*] This was the cant term used for money gained by cheating, as we learn from Greene's Art of Conveycatching. BOSWELL.

5 — the men would carry coals.] It appears that in Shakspeare's age, *to carry coals* was, I know not why, *to endure affronts.* So, in Romeo and Juliet, one serving-man asks another whether he will *carry coals.* JOHNSON.

See note on Romeo and Juliet, Act I. Sc. I.